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July 15, 1999

Mr. William Hubbard  
Dockets Management Branch (HFA305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket #98N-1038 "Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food"

Dear Mr. Hubbard,

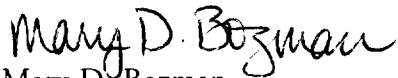
I am extremely concerned about the prospect of weakening or eliminating the labeling requirements for irradiated food. Any foods, or any foods containing ingredients that have been treated by irradiation, should be clearly labeled with a written statement on the product itself indicating such treatment. The statement should be easy to read and accompanied by the radura, the international symbol of irradiated food. If the food is not packaged, this information should be clearly displayed on a poster in plain view and adjacent to where the product is displayed for sale and a sticker should be placed on the item, such as an apple, that indicates to the consumer that this apple has been irradiated.

Like other labels required by federal law, irradiation labels must be truthful and not misleading. Proposals to use euphemistic phrases like "cold pasteurization" are inappropriate because pasteurization is an entirely different process. There can be no such thing as "cold pasteurization" even though many consumers may not realize what the words actually mean. The terms "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation" should be retained because they accurately portray the irradiation process. The radura symbol, without written disclosure is not enough!

We all have the right to know how our foods have been processed. It is unacceptable that companies will be given the right to market irradiated products without informing the consumer. It's all about money! The people who do not understand what a term such as "cold pasteurization" implies would understand what "irradiated" means. Business wants to avoid losing sales of their irradiated product to the "less informed" consumer, who perhaps out of ignorance rather than a genuine fear of the implications of irradiation may not purchase an irradiated product. This is a blatant disregard for human rights. I have a right to know if the tomato I just ate has cod genes spliced into it's DNA or if the apple I just bit has been exposed to radiation. These rights are under attack every day and they must be protected. We need heroes in our government organizations who will stand up for the rights of us all. Truth, Justice and the American Way? No truth or justice in not informing your consumer! Is this becoming the American Way?

Please protect my right to know. Don't let "big business" take advantage of their position. I don't want to eat irradiated food. I don't want to feed my loved ones irradiated food. Enough "wool pulling"; the American public needs to be informed! What an awful thought! A country of blind mice that have no freedom to make decisions that impact their existence. Is this what you want for your loved ones and friends? Don't let our country become controlled by big business and the desire to "make a buck." Big business is encouraging the government not to include the consumer because "what they don't know, won't hurt them." Please don't let this happen to us. Please protect the basic rights that this country was founded on.

Very Sincerely,

  
Mary D. Bozman

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